United Nations A/50/PV.128

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

128th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 17 September 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral

The meeting was called to order at 12.50 p.m.

Agenda item 120 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/50/888/Add.11)

The President: I should like to inform the General Assembly that since the issuance of document A/50/888/Add.11 of 16 September 1996, Mali has made the necessary payments to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

This information will be reflected in an addendum to document A/50/888.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The President: The Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 113 and 138 (a), 114, 120, 121, 125, 126, 128, 134 and 116.

I request the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Peter Maddens of Belgium, to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Maddens (Belgium), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee *(interpretation from French)*: I have the honour to present to the General Assembly the reports of the Fifth Committee on the items on its agenda during the last part of the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

All negotiations on the various items on the agenda took place in informal meetings under the chairmanship — pursuant to the usual practice of the Committee — of the members of the Bureau of the Committee.

I shall now present a brief report of the work of the Fifth Committee during the last part of the resumed session.

With regard to item 113, "Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors" and item 138 (a), "Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/50/850/Add.5. In paragraph 5 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of three draft decisions. The draft decisions were adopted by consensus and proposed to defer substantive discussion on those agenda items to the next session of the General Assembly.

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With regard to agenda item 114, "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/50/840/Add.2. In that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision. The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 116, "Programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/50/842/Add.4. In that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of three draft decisions, two of which are procedural in nature and were adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. The third draft decision, which relates to the implementation of the draft budget for the biennium 1996-1997, was adopted by the Fifth Committee by a recorded vote.

With regard to agenda item 120, "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/50/843/Add.2. In that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision. The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 121, "United Nations common system", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/50/844/Add.1. In paragraph 6 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision. The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee by consensus.

With regard to agenda item 125, "Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/50/819/Add.2. In that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision. The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 126, "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/50/818/Add.1. In that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution. The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 128, "Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/50/796/Add.4. In paragraph 6 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision. The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote.

Finally, with regard to agenda item 134, "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/50/846/Add.2. In paragraph 5 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision. The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote.

The President: May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless notification otherwise is provided in advance.

Agenda item 113 and agenda item 138 *(continued)*

Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations

(a) Financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part VI) (A/50/850/Add.5)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the three draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of part VI of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision I, entitled "Management of peace-keeping assets". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision II, entitled "Peace-keeping Reserve Fund". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision III, entitled "Rates of reimbursement to troop-contributing States". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision III was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 113 and sub-item (a) of agenda item 138, and of agenda item 138 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 114 ***(continued)***

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part III) (A/50/840/Add.2)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of part III of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 114?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 120 ***(continued)***

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part III) (A/50/843/Add.2)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of part III of its report. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 120?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 121

United Nations common system

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/844/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision, entitled "Conditions of service of the Professional and higher categories: examination of the Noblemaire principle and its application". May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 121?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 125 ***(continued)***

Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part III) (A/50/819/Add.2)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of part III of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 125?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 126 ***(continued)***

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/50/818/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of part II of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 50/246).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 126?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 128 ***(continued)***

Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part V) (A/50/796/Add.4)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of part V of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 128?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 134 ***(continued)***

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part III) (A/50/846/Add.2)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of part III of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 134?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 116 ***(continued)***

Programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part V) (A/50/842/Add.4)

The President: The Fifth Committee has recommended three draft decisions, contained in paragraph 10 of part V of its report, for adoption by the Assembly. We shall take up each draft decision separately.

The Assembly will now take up draft decision I. The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The President: The Assembly will now take up draft decision II. The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The President: We shall now take up draft decision III.

I call on the representative of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Connor: On behalf of the Secretary-General, and in the light of the fact that the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the budget reduction, document A/C.5/50/57/Add.1, was submitted only recently, and that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions is still reviewing the report, and also in the light of the request by Member States as expressed in the Fifth Committee on the question of involuntary separation of staff, the Secretariat has decided to defer action related to the involuntary separation of staff to achieve the objectives of General Assembly resolution 50/214 until the General Assembly has considered the report of the Secretary-General, and in the meantime continuing effort will be made to find appropriate placement for them.

Mr. Vilchez Asher (Nicaragua): In my capacity as Chairman of the Fifth Committee I would like to present an oral amendment to draft decision III that has been agreed upon by all the delegations concerned. After the words "The General Assembly", replace the existing text with the following new text:

> "takes note of the decision of the Secretary-General to defer action related to the involuntary separation of staff to achieve the objectives of General Assembly resolution 50/214 until the General Assembly has considered the report of the Secretary-General and, in the meantime, continuing effort will be made to find appropriate placement for them."

I expect that with this oral amendment we will be able to approve the draft decision by consensus.

The President: We will now proceed to take a decision on the oral amendment proposed by the representative of Nicaragua: after the words "The General Assembly", replace the existing text with the following:

> "takes note of the decision of the Secretary-General to defer action related to the involuntary separation of staff to achieve the objectives of General Assembly resolution 50/214 until the General Assembly has considered the report of the Secretary-General and, in the meantime, continuing effort will be made to find appropriate placement for them."

May I take it that the Assembly agrees to adopt this oral amendment?

The oral amendment was adopted.

The President: The Assembly will now proceed to take a decision on draft decision III as a whole, as orally amended.

I now call on the representative of Ireland, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft decision.

Mr. Kelly (Ireland): I have the honour to make a statement in explanation of position on behalf of the European Union.

The European Union does not believe that there is any need for the General Assembly to take a decision at this time on this matter, particularly in the light of the statement that has just been made by the representative of the Secretary-General and the fact that the report of the Secretary-General, A/C.5/50/57/Add.1, has not yet been introduced in the General Assembly.

We have consistently expressed the view that the issues giving rise to the matter now being raised fall solely within the province of the Secretary-General. Our abiding concern remains the proper management of the Secretariat. An organization of 9,000 people cannot be run effectively if every decision to redeploy or dismiss

staff — following the proper procedures, of course — is interfered with by the General Assembly.

For this reason the European Union does not support the draft decision which has just been proposed by the President of the General Assembly, following its introduction by the Chairman of the Fifth Committee. However, we will not oppose its being adopted without a vote. I also wish to state that if a vote had been taken on this draft decision, the European Union would have abstained.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft decision III as a whole, as orally amended?

Draft decision III, as a whole, as orally amended, was adopted.

The President: I call on the representative of Costa Rica, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of position on the decision just adopted.

Mrs. Incera (Costa Rica) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

It is the understanding of the Group of 77 and China that the decision of the Secretary-General, which has just been announced by Under-Secretary-General Connor, means that no letters of involuntary separation will be sent until such time as the General Assembly considers and adopts the report of the Secretary-General, as requested in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. Furthermore, this makes null and void statements made by other representatives of the Secretariat during deliberations on this item in the recently concluded resumed session of the Fifth Committee, especially those of representatives of the Office of Legal Affairs and the Office of Human Resources Management.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 116?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to remind delegations that the following agenda items, on which action has been taken at previous meetings, have remained open for consideration during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

Item 20 Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Item 24 Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

Item 42 Question of Palestine

Item 44 The situation in the Middle East

Item 45 The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Item 95 Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

Item 112 Human rights questions

Item 115 Programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995

Item 122 Financing of the United Nations peace-keeping forces in the Middle East

Item 123 Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission.

Item 124 Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991)

Item 131 Financing of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus

Item 132 Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia

Item 133 Financing of the United Nations Mission in Haiti

Item 135 Financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

Item 136 Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law

Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Item 137 Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan

Item 140 United Nations Decade of International Law

Item 159 Human resources management

Item 160 Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Item 167 Financing of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Item 168 Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium

Item 169 Financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force

As members are aware, these items have been included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to conclude its consideration of these items at the present session?

It was so decided.

Closing address by the President

The President: The end of my mandate as President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session has now arrived, and I would like to say farewell to all, and to thank the Secretary-General, the Permanent Representatives of Member States and the staff of the General Assembly for the excellent cooperation we have had and for the advice and support I have received from all over the past year.

During the course of this year we witnessed some important events that deserve to be mentioned. First of all, the United Nations celebrated its fiftieth anniversary last October with a historic meeting of almost all Heads of State or Heads of Government of Member countries. In their words and speeches, they and the peoples they represent committed themselves unequivocally to the United Nations and its ideals. In the many statements made on that occasion, these ideals were constantly evoked: peace and development, human rights and international cooperation. I heard no one defend the practice of war or advocate the denial of assistance to less fortunate peoples. I heard no one extol the virtues of dictatorship or champion isolationism.

Of course, it is not enough to proclaim ideals. Real acts must follow. But the fact that we all agree on what our common values are — those of the United Nations — signifies that part of our work is done. What still remains is for all to work together to agree on the means to achieve these ideals.

An example of this was the adoption by a significant majority only last week of the text of the comprehensive test-ban Treaty. Let us hope that this will be a true gift by our generation to future generations and to a better world.

The fiftieth session of the General Assembly was marked by a concerted effort towards reforming the Organization. Under my chairmanship or coordination, five working groups have been vigorously tackling the vital questions that hold the key to strengthening the United Nations. The work that has been done this year by these groups has already begun the process of identifying the specific issues which need to be addressed by Member States. This work must now continue to translate ideas and positions into action and real change. Member States have announced that they would reform the Organization, but now they must deliver. The world expects this. The issues cannot just be endlessly debated. There must be action, and there must be action soon.

On my very first day here at the United Nations, I made an appeal to you all. I am making that same appeal to you here and now: let us not be afraid of dialogue, of free discussion, of the clash of ideas and proposals, but let us also not be afraid of negotiation, of the spirit of compromise and of the building of consensus. On this, I made every fair effort to be always available to Member States, and I hope that you found in me a President you could count on.

Allow me once again to insist on the reform process. A comprehensive approach must be taken to strengthen the United Nations as a whole. The constituent parts of the United Nations must act in a more efficient and coordinated manner. Only in that way will the activities of the United Nations and the pursuit of its objectives and purposes be made more effective. The United Nations can and must be less expensive and more efficient. Cost-cutting and productivity gains are thus welcome, but should not be sought for their own sake. The United Nations budget is really quite small when compared to those of national Governments. As I have often said, the regular budget of the United Nations in 1995 was equal to only 25 per cent of the budget of the Portuguese Ministry of Education. In real and relative terms, the United Nations does not really cost that much, so any reforms in the administrative structure of the Organization must result in real advantages and not just seek to cut the budget.

The unprecedented financial crisis, which has jeopardized the work of this Organization and threatened to bring it to a halt, must not be ignored. The crisis resulted primarily from unpaid assessed contributions by Member States. This situation is not acceptable. It should be remembered, and repeated again and again, that payment of assessed contributions is a freely accepted responsibility and a duty of all States large or small, and they must be paid in full, on time and without conditions. The Organization desperately needs funds. Member States must continue to act to prevent total financial rupture. In this context, I wish to thank all Heads of State and Heads of Government who responded positively to the letter I sent them on 15 February requesting the payment of their 1996 contributions not later than 30 June.

As Chairman of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations, I must confess that I was disappointed to see the premature interruption of its work towards placing the Organization on a sound financial basis because of the effects of the cash crisis. I sincerely hope that this impasse will be overcome in the near future. A step in that direction may be the proposal voiced here yesterday by Ireland on behalf of the European Union for the convening of an orientation debate on the financial situation of the United Nations.

The role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security continues to be a primary one and must be supported by all Member States. Recently, more emphasis has been rightly placed on the prevention of conflicts and on the need for a greater role for regional organizations. At the same time, however, the United Nations and, in particular, the Security Council remain essential to the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Member States have agreed that the Security Council must be brought up to date. The exponential increase in the membership of the United Nations has made necessary an expansion in the size of the Council in order to strengthen its representative character. This, along with improvements in its working methods, will serve to make the Council more transparent and, therefore, more effective in its decisions and in their implementation.

The links between sustainable development and peace cannot be overestimated. The best way to prevent conflicts and civil strife is to lay down the foundations for social and economic progress by attacking the root causes of war in poverty.

The activities of the United Nations in social and economic development must continue to be one of the very highest priorities of the Organization. It has been observed that at present the international community lacks the political will to address the continuing difficulties faced by developing countries. However, we must not forget that the gap between development needs and financial resources is a global problem which, therefore, inevitably requires global solutions. In this context, it is interesting to note the research done on issues related to the so-called global commons, including studies on innovative financial mechanisms for development.

The efforts of the United Nations in promoting economic and social progress should concentrate on helping countries and people help themselves. In particular, the difficulties experienced by the African continent should receive the fullest attention of the international community so that the cycles of poverty and violence can be effectively and permanently broken.

This year also marked the celebration, on 18 April in The Hague, of the fiftieth anniversary of the International Court of Justice. I had the honour to be present at the ceremony, representing the United Nations as a whole. I believe that it is an absolute obligation of any member of an organization to abide faithfully by the rules of law applicable to it. If disagreements arise concerning the application of these rules, the principle of separation of powers requires that those disagreements should be settled impartially by a court of law. The Charter of the United Nations provides for such a judicial body: the International Court of Justice.

As I remarked in my inaugural statement as President of the General Assembly,

> "it is therefore utterly desirable for all countries that are Members of the United Nations to accept, within a relatively short time, the jurisdiction of the Court at The Hague. That it should still be possible to refuse the Court's jurisdiction strikes me as an anachronism left over from the days of unlimited State sovereignty, which is inconsistent with the prevailing principle of the primacy of international law." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 1st meeting, p. 8)*

Nevertheless, the reality is that the International Court of Justice still remains what it was at its inception. Regrettably, the appeal for the acceptance of compulsory jurisdiction found no widespread response, and the great majority of the membership of the United Nations still does not accept, in general terms, the authority of the Court.

I will, however, continue to appeal to those who can lead, and to the willingness of all, to set up a more effective system of enforcement of international law. I will continue to strive for the establishment of international courts with binding jurisdiction to determine when international laws are violated and to better serve as forums for the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

Allow me to take this opportunity to refer to two issues which are of particular interest to me as a Portuguese citizen. The creation of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries in Lisbon last July was a historic event. This international organization unites countries from different parts of the globe which share, however, common values and a vision of international cooperation. It seems to me to be a wonderful example of the spirit of the United Nations in action.

On the other hand, I was not fortunate enough to see during this year substantial progress in the extremely difficult situation of East Timor. I saw with interest, however, that talks and bilateral negotiations continued, under the mediation of the Secretary-General, between Portugal and Indonesia.

The United Nations continues to be subjected to increasing criticism. The criticisms range widely: from the serious, which, in seeking to increase the Organization's efficiency and effectiveness, deserve to be taken into account; to the incredulous, which derive from obscurantist attempts to alter the public's perception of the United Nations.

Let us be serious about the United Nations. Can democracies criticize the United Nations for promoting democracy? Can peace-loving nations criticize the United Nations for working for peace? Can we criticize the United Nations for aiding the poor, the sick and the needy? Can those who cherish freedom criticize the United Nations for defending human rights, for fighting racism and ethnic persecution, and for having opposed apartheid?

The world has become a global village. All human beings have become our neighbours. Do we want to help them, or do we want to let them die in war, in political repression or in extreme poverty? The United Nations is less about money or management than about our own concept of life, morality and justice. If we consider ourselves to be true humanists and if our main concern is with everything human, then we must draw the inevitable conclusion that the United Nations is worth our praise and that we must support its activities with all our heart and soul.

The fiftieth session of the General Assembly is now closing. I am honoured to have been its President. I wish the General Assembly every success in its fifty-first session and convey to its President my best wishes. Thank you all.

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President: We are now coming to the end of the fiftieth regular session of the General Assembly. May I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Closure of the fiftieth session

The President: I declare closed the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 1:40 p.m.